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## **Customers give liquor stores, employees high marks in survey**

*New ideas could generate \$4.5 million in 2011-2013*

**OLYMPIA** – A December telephone survey by Elway Research, Inc. showed most liquor store customers gave high marks for customer service, liquor store employee courtesy, product selection and store locations. The survey also revealed customer support for changes to further improve convenience and generate \$4.5 million of revenue in 2011-2013.

In the wake of the defeats of the two liquor privatization initiatives, Gov. Chris Gregoire directed the Washington State Liquor Control Board (WSLCB) to sponsor a survey to better understand the public's attitudes toward additional stores, new store models, standard hours, gift cards, and more.

"Overall, I am very pleased that the survey results showed that our store employees are doing an excellent job," said Gov. Gregoire. "Most customers give high marks to our stores and their employees. The results also show the majority of store customers support new ideas for added convenience, such as standard hours of operation and specialty stores in urban markets."

### Survey Highlights

- 89 percent gave store employees a grade of "A" or "B" for courtesy;
- 81 percent gave product selection a grade of "A" or "B";
- 87 percent gave convenience of the store's location a grade of "A" or "B"; and
- Two-thirds of customers said the state has the "right number" of stores.

"We are pleased that our performance ranked high with customers," said Liquor Control Board Chair Sharon Foster. "The results help validate the board's work to modernize stores, improve the customer shopping experience and increase convenience with simple changes like opening stores on Sundays and holidays."

Gov. Gregoire has directed the WSLCB to pursue several ideas this legislative session that could further improve convenience and generate an additional \$4.5 million during the 2011-13 biennium.

“While most customers expressed general support for the new customer service ideas, most non-customers did not,” said Liquor Control Board Chair Sharon Foster. “We plan to implement any new ideas in small steps and over time.”

Ideas include:

- 15 new stores, including:
  - Eight additional liquor stores
  - Co-locations pilot: Up to five liquor stores located within grocery stores
  - Specialty stores: Liquor stores located in major urban markets offering a broader selection of products
- Standard hours of operation for liquor stores
- Liquor store gift cards
- Online ordering: Purchase would be picked up at the store by restaurants, nightclubs and retail customers.
- Liquor-related products: State liquor stores could sell products such as ice and barware.
- Delivery to restaurants: Spirits could be delivered directly to participating restaurants. Currently, restaurants pick up orders at liquor stores.

Most ideas will require authorization in the final state budget.

Elway Research, Inc. conducted a telephone survey of 1,210 adult citizens, including 599 liquor store customers and 611 non-customers in December 2010. Key findings, charts and question and response data are available on the WSLCB website at <http://www.liq.wa.gov/about/2011-survey-results>. The survey cost \$31,000.

The Washington State Liquor Control Board’s mission is to contribute to the safety and financial stability of our communities by ensuring the responsible sale, and preventing the misuse of, alcohol and tobacco. The WSLCB returned \$370.3 million in Fiscal Year 2010 to fund essential state and local services.

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